

BULLETIN

NO: 21-084
DATE: May 27, 2021
TO: All Personnel
FROM: Chris Webber, Assistant Fire Chief, Emergency Operations
SUBJECT: Fire Season 2021 Preparations

The 2021 Fire Season is already upon us and drought conditions have intensified statewide. The information contained within this bulletin is a collection of essential information to ensure our personnel are prepared. It is important that everyone is prepared to ensure their own personal safety, preparedness, situational awareness and success.

Strike Teams

The type 1 and type 3 individual unit strike team rotations can be found on the Outlook schedule “SDFD Strike Team Rotation”. Individual units in the groups are assigned to a two-week period and are first up for strike team duty. It is imperative that all personnel within those groups are ready for deployment.

Example of unit rotation calendar

	1/01 to 01/14	01/15 to 01/28	01/29 to 02/11	02/12 to 02/25	02/26 to 03/11
TYPE 1	T-1 GRP 1: E6, E9, E23, E7 E51	T-1 GRP 2: E46, E27, E32 E17, E13, E36	T-1 GRP 3: E11, E8, E21, E16, E30	T-1 GRP 4: E28, E1, E31, E47, E22	T-1 GRP 5: E42, E39, E38, E20, E19, E50
	T-3 GRP 1: BR12, BR24, BR44, BR34, BR43	T-3 GRP 2: BR10, BR29, BR37, BR40, BR14, BR35	T-3 GRP 1: BR44, BR34, BR43, BR12, BR24	T-3 GRP 2: BR37, BR40, BR14, BR35, BR10, BR29	T-3 GRP 1: BR43, BR12, BR24, BR44, BR34

Personnel having conflicts regarding deployment shall notify their immediate supervisor and make arrangements to switch station assignments with personnel willing to switch and assume strike team deployment duties. The following process will take place and will be completed prior to 0900 hours. The goal of this process is for there to be no delay in strike team response.

1. The supervising battalion chief will be notified via the chain-of-command regarding the conflict. The notification should take place as soon as the conflict is identified. Notifications prior to the actual shift are extremely helpful.
2. The employee will switch station assignments and strike team duty with an on-duty employee of equal rank.
3. The two employees will physically exchange/switch work assignment locations (fire stations) for the entire shift. This should be done by 0900 hours.

2021 Fire Season Preparations

4. Personnel staffing the strike team units (OES, type 1 and type 3) identified on the calendar rotation shall complete the rosters on the S:\!!!!Strike Team Rosters folder by 0900 hours.
5. Off-duty personnel will not be used to relieve individuals being deployed on a strike team. Exchange of work assignments is allowed with on-duty personnel of equal rank and qualification.
6. The supervising battalion chief shall ensure that all components of this process are followed and that staffing, strike team roster updates and STEN notifications are completed.

Rosters shall be set by 0900 hours and all personnel should be prepared to deploy without delay and be gone for up to 14 days, and even longer in some situations. It is not a prudent decision to go on a strike team assignment if you have a scheduled vacation, promotional exam, etc. Replacing personnel on strike teams already deployed is a very complicated process and should not be requested unless there are extreme unforeseen circumstances.

Strike Team Internal Order (IO) Numbers and Pay

The following information is provided to standardize OneSD entries and the use of internal orders (IO) for strike teams.

Internal Order (IO) Numbers

1. The following internal orders shall be used only by those deployed (not backfill).
 - IO# 11003634 – Weather-Related Upstaffing for all resources (Strike Team, Task Force, etc.)
 - IO# 11003847 – Assistance by Hire (ABH) for all resources (Strike Team, Task Force, etc.)
 - Other IOs for specific deployments:
 - IO# 11001726 – Strike Teams Overtime
 - IO# 11001727 – Overhead Deployment Overtime (*Single Resource only*)
 - IO# 11001746 – IMT SD OPS Area Incidents
 - IO# 11004142 – State US&R Deployments OES
 - IO# 11004182 – Cal OES Swiftwater Search & Rescue
 - IO# 11004222 – HIRT State Deployment OES
 - IO# 11004224 – Federal US&R Deployments FEMA
2. As a reminder, a complete list of IOs is available on the S: drive at the following location: S:\Operations\IO Numbers.

Upon Deployment

1. If the employee is on regular duty:
 - Continue this pay for remainder of work shift (0800)
 - Move to premium pay at end of shift (0800 hours)
2. If the employee is on any other status (ALT, TW, etc.):
 - Continue this pay until shift is required to be extended, then move to premium pay.
For example: If an employee is working a 12-hour (0800-2000) trade work (TW), this status will be continued to 2000 hours. At 2000 hours when the

2021 Fire Season Preparations

employee's shift needs to be extended, the employee would then receive premium pay.

Returning from Deployment When 96-Hour Rule Remains in Effect

Upon returning from deployment that exceeds 96 hours on a regularly assigned shift, employees are not required to return to duty and will receive premium pay for remaining hours until end of regular duty shift

Returning from Deployment on a Regularly Assigned Shift When 96-Hour Rule Suspended

1. Stay on-duty for remainder of shift
 - Receive premium pay until regularly assigned shift is complete (0800)
2. Elect to go off-duty
 - Use personal leave time (annual leave, comp time, etc.) to cover remaining time in shift
3. There is no 4-hour off then return to duty provision in the reimbursement contract with the State. Therefore, employees who return on an on-duty day will need to either elect to stay on-duty or use leave time.

Strike Team OneSD Entry

1. Station
 - Use station and division where assigned at start of deployment for all days
2. Attendance Type (Pay Code)
 - Deployed Fire Suppression (0175)
 - Deployed Trade Worked (0196)
 - Deployed Fire Admin Staff (0198)

Fire Crews

CAL FIRE has seen a tremendous reduction in their Fire Crew strength leaving the statewide Fire Crew program decimated. CAL FIRE is working several alternative plans to ensure there are crews available.

Currently CAL FIRE has:

- Paid firefighter crews out of Rainbow camp
- National Guard Crew out of the National Guard Armory in El Cajon
- CCC crews out of CAL FIRE Monte Vista headquarters in El Cajon

In the past, CAL FIRE had 18 CDCR crews staffed in San Diego County. It appears that there will be no CDCR crews left in San Diego County this year and very few throughout the state.

SDFD has added wildland tools and equipment to type 1 engines, and brush bars and chains to the chainsaws on the type 1 engines that have a brush rig assigned to their station. The department has also provided excellent wildland training over the past few years for all ranks ensuring we are well prepared. It will remain our practice to put finish line around all our vegetation fires with no exception.

COVID19 Preparations

COVID 19 remains a consideration. The National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) has developed a document that addresses best practices when engaging on wildland incidents. This document can be found on the S: Drive >Operations >2020 NWCG COVID19 Wildland Response. If you have not already reviewed the document, please do so now to make needed preparations to ensure your safety and that of your crew while

deployed.

Fire Attack Modes for Strike Teams

The Metro Zone policy outlines initial attack, immediate need, and planned need as:

A. Initial Attack (Closest units)

Generally, responses within the Metro Zone to PROTECT LIFE OR PROPERTY imminently threatened by an event. The **closest available resources** should be selected and respond to the incident as quickly as possible. Personnel can expect to be assigned and begin tactical operations upon arrival at the incident. In order to meet the above objectives, incident command and tactical radio channels must be assigned to any Metro Zone Strike Team/Task Force requested for initial attack responses.

B. Immediate Need (MZ Strike Team Deployment Matrix used)

Generally requested for responses within the Operational Area, and adjacent or other Operational Area. Resources should respond to the incident as quickly as possible and may or may not respond code

Metro Zone assigned resources will respond within five minutes of dispatch. Personnel can expect to be assigned and begin tactical operations upon arrival at the incident or within the current operational period. Incident command and tactical radio channels along with a travel channel, must be assigned to any Metro Zone strike team/task force. The need to form up all units at a rendezvous location is at the discretion of the Metro Zone coordinator and/or STEN/TFLD. Greater travel distances increase the need for forming up resources together for safe travel and response coordination. **All out of county responses require resources to form up and respond together.**

C. Planned Need (MZ Strike Team Deployment Matrix used)

Resources should form up at a rendezvous location and travel together to the incident reporting location by the requested time. Metro Zone has agreed that assigned resources will meet at the designated rendezvous location within 60 minutes of dispatch. Personnel can expect to be assigned to the incident and begin tactical operations at a future operational period than when the request was received.

The Metro Zone Strike Team Deployment Rotation Matrix shall be used for both immediate need and planned need responses. For initial attack strike team responses, SND will send their closest resources selected by CAD. The Mutual Aid Response Information Sheet documents incident response information for resource deployments. It is a form used by the Metro Zone Emergency Command and Data Center (ECDC) to collect and communicate valuable information received from the requesting agency for the STEN/TFLD. Some of the information includes, but is not limited to:

- Strike team/task force number
- Request number
- Units within strike team/task force
- Strike team/task force leader and trainee
- Travel radio frequency
- Rendezvous location with map page
- Incident name and reporting location with map page
- Incident command and tactical radio frequencies

Air Operations

Air Operations will be staffing a second helicopter starting in July for 10 hours/day. Expect that Copter 3 will be responding to all 1st Alarm vegetation fires along with Copter 1 or 2. Copter 3 carries up to 1,000 gallons of water and can vary the coverage level of the drop based on fuel type and can also spilt the drop, delivering a full load or two half loads. Whenever aircraft are assigned it is important to remember to have your VHF radio with you. Utilizing VHF Air to Ground is mandatory when we receive assistance from outside agency aircraft.

Radio Channels and Communications

- A. For all vegetation responses, all personnel are to take both 800 MHz and VHF radios with them. This ensures constant communications when the incident moves from 800 to VHF.
- B. Travel channels:
 - In county responses: **12A**
 - o Units are reminded that while enroute use only the travel channel for communication within the strike team and stay off the command and tactical channels.
 - Out of county responses: VHF CESRSd (Group 19)
- C. VHF frequency use and assignments:
 - Many agencies throughout San Diego County utilize VHF frequencies at the time of dispatch to vegetation fires.
 - SDFD also assigns VHF frequencies for our use.
 - All personnel should ensure they are familiar with their assigned VHF radios, how to add and delete command and tactical frequencies, create scan groups and ensure your frequency fleet map is up to date.
- D. The following communication procedures should be followed on ALL vegetation fires:
 - Division Supervisors should communicate with the IC on the command frequency.
 - If the Operations Section Chief is established, Division Supervisors should then communicate with Operations on the command frequency.
 - Tactical frequencies are for Division Supervisors and their assigned units to communicate amongst themselves.
 - IC/OPS are not required to monitor assigned tactical frequencies but must monitor both command and air to ground frequencies.
 - Whenever CAL FIRE resources are requested, such as fixed wing aircraft or fire crews, all units should anticipate a transition to the VHF communications plan. This transition will be communicated by IC/OPS to all units operating at the fire. Captains are directed to carry both radios when away from the apparatus. Firefighters and engineers are also encouraged to carry both radios when possible to ensure communications between all resources.
 - Incoming fixed wing aircraft will hail the incident commander on the assigned VHF command frequency and then switch to the air to ground frequency after contact is made.

Mutual Threat Zones

1. We have two Mutual Threat Zones (MTZ) with CAL FIRE.
 - a. One in the San Pasqual Valley/Lake Hodges area, the other along the east side of Battalion 6.

2021 Fire Season Preparations

- b. The purpose of the MTZ is to put all agencies on one communications plan, communicating with one dispatch center from the time of dispatch.
2. VHF frequencies will be assigned at the time of dispatch by Monte Vista ECC (MVU).
 - a. SND units will communicate with MVU until released from the incident on those assigned frequencies, including initial size up and resource requests.
 - b. 10K may be used as a temporary communication frequency until a working VHF frequency is identified as there may be a delay in assigning the channels by MVU.
3. VHF Tactical and Air to Ground frequencies will be assigned and utilized on ALL vegetation fires as aircraft and out of county resources do not have 800 MHz radios.
4. Responding units may be initially out range of the assigned VHF frequency. When this occurs, 10K can be used to go responding. Units are to switch to VHF when in range.

P-Cards

- P-Cards are issued in the name of the specific captain and are only to be used by the captain (AKA 'cardholder').
- These P-Cards are for use on strike team deployments only.
- The Emergency Command and Data Center (ECDC) will continue to distribute cash bags as a backup to the P-Card.
- P-Cards will remain deactivated until the captain is deployed on a strike team.
- Upon return from deployment, the cards will then be deactivated.
- It will be the responsibility of each captain to ensure their card's security, location, and availability during strike team deployments (including immediate need).
- Upon deployment, P-Cards must be activated by contacting the on-duty ECDC Command BC.
- P-Card credit limits will initially be \$2,000 with a one-day limit of \$1,000.
- If an increase in credit limit is required, contact the on-duty ECDC Command BC. Anticipate this need as it takes a few hours to make effective.
- If an SND Battalion Chief is assigned as a Strike Team Leader or Strike Team Leader/Trainee, the Battalion Chief's card shall be utilized whenever possible.
- All efforts should be made to utilize only one P-Card per strike team to minimize accounting issues and administrative workload.
- An original itemized receipt (includes store name, phone, address, date of transaction, itemized description of purchase, including tax) for all transactions must be received, saved and submitted upon return from deployment.
- A 24-hour number (888.449.2273) is located on the back of each card to reach Bank of America if any issues are encountered for example if card lost, stolen or fraud alert that prevents use of the card.
- Questions regarding use during strike teams should be directed to the on-duty ECDC Command BC. If the ECDC Command BC is unavailable, contact the on-duty Shift Commander.

Strike Team Etiquette

All PPE shall be brought on strike team deployments regardless of type 1 or 3. All personnel will bring proper uniform including a **Class B uniform**.

Some good reminders from the CAL OES Strike Team Leaders Handbook:

- *REMEMBER: It may be some time before you eat and get a place to sleep. You can get wet, dirty, and cold. Be prepared to take care of your personal needs. Being properly*

2021 Fire Season Preparations

prepared strengthens personal confidence and security.

- *Do not bring non-fire related equipment on engines (e.g. mattresses, chairs, etc.). If it doesn't fit in the compartments, do not take it. You are responding to an emergency.*
- *Be prepared to be unsupported for the first 24-hours.*

More detailed information is contained in the SDFD drill manual in Chapter 13 starting on page 45: <http://sdfd.targetsafety.com/drillmanual/Chapter13/pdf/Chapter13.pdf>

These directives and reminders are provided to keep you safe and to provide all San Diego Fire-Rescue Department personnel with the tools and guidance to make our strike team deployments a high-level operation. Questions should be routed through the chain of command.

METRO ZONE STRIKE TEAM CODE OF CONDUCT

1. I will treat all firefighters, officers, and the public with respect.
2. I will at all times conduct myself in a professional manner.
3. I will maintain a state of readiness when assigned, available and unassigned.
4. I will keep my supervisor informed of any issues that may impact my operational readiness or my ability to perform duties as assigned.
5. I will carry out orders as directed.
6. I am empowered to halt any unsafe or hazardous acts in which the risks outweigh the benefits.
7. I will respect the property of the residents I am protecting.
8. I understand that my actions are a reflection of the Metro Zone and my organization.
9. I will know which agency I am working for or providing support to.
10. I will communicate concerns, operational or otherwise, through my chain of command.
11. I will not transport or consume alcohol or illegal drugs.
12. I will not enter any residence without the owner's permission except to search or defend the structure or seek refuge when necessary. Unit leaders will leave a note at the residence detailing their actions and communicate their unit's activity through their chain of command.
13. I will maintain and wear all safety clothing as appropriate.
14. I will wear clothing that reflects my agency or as determined by the incident.
15. I will use normal radio procedures and keep radio traffic to a minimum.
16. I will know and comply with proper procedures and policies when assigned to commercial lodging for off shift rest.
17. I will be prepared to function unsupported for at least 24 hours.
18. I will have full turnouts for structure fires.
19. I will have all required wildland personal protective equipment.
20. I will limit the procurement of equipment to what is needed.
21. I will return all equipment issued at the incident before I am demobilized.
22. Violation of these rules may be grounds for dismissal from the ST/TF assignment.